

Economic Development Element

Introduction

Implementation of the General Plan Economic Development Element is essential to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life in Fairfield. Economic development provides the community with the means to shape its destiny by ensuring that adequate levels of public services will be provided in the future. The Economic Development Element sets forth policies, which if successfully implemented, will maintain a healthy jobs-housing balance and provide for a diversity of quality businesses and jobs. Attracting and retaining quality jobs and development, preserving the local economy, including agriculture, and maintaining the viability of Travis Air Force Base are key policies.

The Economic Development Element is closely related to other elements such as Land Use; Open Space, Conservation and Recreation; and Housing. As this element seeks to sustain a strong economic base, the Land Use Element also designates residential, commercial, and industrial uses throughout the city. The Housing Element includes policies which will make possible the growth of affordable housing to maintain a desirable jobs-housing balance. The Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element preserves substantial portions of the planning area as permanent open space, protecting natural and visual resources. In conjunction with the other elements, the Economic Development Element will play an important role toward preserving the quality of life for the city's future.

Goal

The goal of the Economic Development Element is:

Maintain and enhance a high quality of life for the City's residents by developing and sustaining a strong and diverse economic base.

Objectives, Policies and Programs

Objective ED 1

Encourage a mix of large and small industries and businesses to support a strong and diverse economic base. This mix should create large numbers of jobs, generate substantial public revenues, and involve high levels of private capital investment. (See Objective LU 14, Policy LU 14.1, and Policy LU 14.2)

Policy ED 1.1

Target and attract industries and businesses which contribute to diversification and stabilization of the local economy. (See Policy LU 14.2)

Program ED 1.1 A

Develop and regularly update an economic development strategy which, in part, identifies the existing economic base, identifies certain business sectors for special expansion and recruitment efforts, and maintains the desired jobs-housing balance.

Policy ED 1.2

Encourage through special programs, including financing, the expansion and attraction of small and medium size firms with good growth potential.

Policy ED 1.3

Identify and mitigate, where appropriate, obstacles to the formation and expansion of local businesses.

Policy ED 1.4

Encourage, through implementation of the Zoning Ordinance, office and professional home occupations. (See Policy LU 13.5)

Policy ED 1.5

Support new business development which does not overburden infrastructure capacities. Provide adequate infrastructure capacity to support new business development, while not negatively impacting operations of the existing business base. (See Objective LU 4 and Policy LU 4.2)

Policy ED 1.6

Recruit and retain a diversity of businesses and industries which meet the skill levels of the community's broad labor pool. At the same time, work with the various job training and educational agencies to develop and match the skill levels of the labor pool to the needs of the economy as a whole.

Policy ED 1.7

Facilitate entitlement processing for all businesses, large, medium, or small, which conform with the objectives in this Element.

Policy ED 1.8

Development incentives should only be used for projects that conform with the Economic Development Element, provide significant private capital investment and/or create a large amount of jobs and public revenues.

Policy ED 1.9

Continue to support the role of Travis Air Force Base as a significant contributor to the economic base of the community. Discourage development which could negatively impact the Base. (See Policy LU 13.3, Phasing Area D Policy 24, Phasing Area E Policies 1, 8-11, Policy CI 8.1, Objective HS 5, and Policy HS 9.3)

Policy ED 1.10

In the event of a change in the status of Travis Air Force Base, work to create joint use or commercial use of the airport. (See Objective CI 8)

Policy ED 1.11

Support development projects which broaden and enhance the City's economic base and produce viable long-term land use patterns.

Program ED 1.11 A

Actively promote the development of land uses which will generate new jobs and tax revenues to the City.

Program ED 1.11 B

Consider, through market studies, the potential long-term land use and economic impacts that major new projects could have on the City or geographical areas of the City by overbuilding or exceeding the market capacity for the types of uses proposed.

Objective ED 2

Effectively concentrate industrial and commercial uses. (See Policy LU 14.3)

Policy ED 2.1

Protect existing businesses within areas designated by the General Plan for existing or future industrial and commercial uses and discourage encroachment by noncompatible uses. Encourage the preservation and expansion of existing industrial uses in areas designated as industrial. (See Policy LU 13.2, Program LU 13.2 A, Policy LU 13.4, and Policy LU 14.1)

Policy ED 2.2

In order to provide a stable economic base, provide sufficient tracts of land at a variety of sizes available for industrial and commercial uses. (See Policy LU 14.1, Policy LU 14.2)

Policy ED 2.3

The Zoning Ordinance shall be implemented to recognize and provide for ongoing and long term changes in business operations and market trends. For example, some facilities may be permitted to include combinations of manufacturing, distribution, wholesaling, and limited retail on one site. The integrity of both the overall area and project must be protected. (See Policy LU 13.4 and Program LU 13.4 A)

Program ED 2.3 A

Incorporate criteria into the Zoning Ordinance to address long-term changes in business operations and market trends. (See Policies LU 14.2 and LU 14.3)

Policy ED 2.4

Areas shall be identified in the General Plan to provide for a concentration of industrial and business uses. Areas shall be designated to provide for primarily manufacturing uses (such as the Tolenas Industrial Park), areas which allow a mixture of uses (such as the Solano Business Park), and areas which are primarily office, research and development uses (such as Fairfield Corporate Commons).

Policy ED 2.5

To minimize traffic impacts, industrial and business activity should be located in areas close to major transportation. Such areas should have room for expansion and sufficient buffers to prevent conditions of potential incompatibility with surrounding uses. (See Policy LU 13.2)

Objective ED 3

Attract and retain commercial uses to support a strong, diverse economic base. These uses should be in balance with the ultimate growth of the community. (See Objective LU 4 and Policy LU 14.3)

Policy ED 3.1

Retail uses which increase the City's revenues by expanding the community's regional retail market share should be attracted to the community. They should not create unmitigatable levels of traffic congestion or other undesirable impacts.

Program ED 3.1 A

As part of the annual economic development plan, analyze the City's per capita sales by market category compared to statewide averages. Target those sectors where the City is deficient or below the state average.

Policy ED 3.2

As the community grows, marketing efforts shall be targeted to attract uses which will complement the City's economic development objectives.

Policy ED 3.3

In the Downtown area, retail, office, financial, government, and professional uses shall be encouraged to expand the current business mix and increase the area's economic viability as a destination point for shopping, work, dining, and entertainment. (See Policy LU 2.2)

Policy ED 3.4

Assist in the retention and expansion of existing businesses which conform with the goal and policies of this element by providing and coordinating available financial and non-financial resources. Examples are financing and loan programs, cooperation with lenders, providing capital loans, technical assistance, and counseling.

Objective ED 4

Select commercial and industrial locations which are convenient, while compatible with the growth and future service needs of the community.

Policy ED 4.1

New commercial land use designations shall be of sufficient size and shape to meet existing and future market and service needs of the overall area in which they are located. (See Policy LU 14.3)

Policy ED 4.2

New commercial areas are encouraged to cluster in identified areas to prevent and discourage strip development. Where appropriate, locate commercial uses at focal points along major arterial streets or expressways. (See Policy LU 14.4)

Policy ED 4.3

The location, size, scale, and design of neighborhood commercial uses shall complement and meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. The

neighborhood concept of providing pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized access shall be encouraged. (See Policies UD 3.2 and UD 3.3 and Objective CI 10)

Policy ED 4.4

To minimize traffic generation impacts, new commercial development shall be located to meet the needs and convenience of the customer base and promote compatibility between land uses. (See Policy CI 10.8)

Objective ED 5

Encourage a balance of office/professional uses which support a strong, diverse economic base and are compatible with the needs of the community.

Policy ED 5.1

Encourage a mix of office and professional uses targeted to different areas throughout the community. Back office projects such as data processing, financial services, and other such uses, shall be encouraged to locate in a business park environment, while professional offices should be encouraged in the urban core areas such as Downtown, Gateway, the Northeast Activity Center and other identified areas.

Policy ED 5.2

Provide for ancillary commercial development in business parks, such as banks and restaurants, in order to provide amenities necessary to attract office uses in these areas.

Policy ED 5.3

Encourage clustered, smaller scale office and professional uses along major streets and in neighborhood centers in a variety of areas dispersed throughout the community to meet the needs of nearby neighborhoods.

Policy ED 5.4

As part of an overall economic development strategy, attract and retain a variety of office and professional uses to not only meet the needs of the community, but to establish a strong office market base servicing the regional and sub-regional area.

Objective ED 6

Create a balance between jobs and housing within the City's planning area. (See Objective LU 1, Policies LU 1.2 and 1.3, and Objective HO 4)

Policy ED 6.1

Coordinate economic development planning with land use planning.

Policy ED 6.2

In areas such as the Downtown and the Fairfield-Vacaville Train Station area, encourage mixed-use development that provides opportunities for a jobs and housing balance at the community, neighborhood, and project level.

Objective ED 7

Create an economic climate conducive to attracting new development and businesses which yield net social and economic benefits to the community.

Policy ED 7.1

Encourage economic development activities which provide, either through initial stages or through expansion, the opportunity for employment of local residents and/or increased municipal revenues.

Policy ED 7.2

Encourage industrial or business uses which create large numbers of new, well paying jobs, and maximize private capital investment based upon the size and scope of the project.

Policy ED 7.3

Preserve and enhance the community's assets and character, including education, agriculture, open space, recreational amenities, cultural amenities, and other factors, which make the community an attractive area to live, work, and invest. (See Objective LU 1 and Objective PF 1)

Policy ED 7.4

Require an equitable sharing of the full cost of public improvements between the public and private sectors. Improvements specifically and originally attributed to a single development, development area, or business shall be borne by those entities. (See Policy LU 4.2, Phasing Area D Policies 6 and 10, Phasing Area E Policy 5, Objective PF 2, and Policies PF 2.1, PF 2.2, and PF 2.3)

Policy ED 7.5

Work to remove impediments to gainful employment, such as lack of transportation, child care, job training, vocational education, and other factors. Coordinate efforts with local, state, federal, and private agencies/organizations. (See Program HO 7.3 A)

Policy ED 7.6

Encourage increased cooperation between the public and private sectors, such as the Chamber of Commerce, plant managers, and business associations, in formulating economic development plans and programs.

Policy ED 7.7

Discourage businesses that have a net negative impact to the community. Businesses shall create minimal and/or mitigatable levels of noise, fumes, odors, hazardous waste, traffic and other negative factors for the community as a whole and their location in particular.

Policy ED 7.8

Support a strong, quality local education system. (See Objective PF 20)

Program ED 7.8 A

The City shall work with the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District and the Travis Unified School District to actively plan for future growth and to ensure that growth levels improve, and do not degrade, the quality of the local educational system. (See Policy PF 20.1)

Objective ED 8

Encourage the preservation and expansion of the local agricultural economy. (See the Agriculture Element, Policy LU 2.1, Objective OS 1, Policy OS 1.1, Policy OS 1.2, and Programs OS 1.2 A, 1.2 B, and 1.2 C)

Policy ED 8.1

Cooperatively work with farmers, property owners, universities, colleges, and agricultural organizations and agencies to enhance the viability of agricultural activities and uses.

Program ED 8.1 A

Continue sponsoring the Downtown Farmers Market and other related activities that promote local farming and agriculture.

Policy ED 8.2

Coordinate open space preservation and conservation programs with economic development programs to enhance agriculture.

Policy ED 8.3

Development shall not encroach upon or consume productive cropland in areas such as the Suisun Valley. (See Policy OS 1.4 and Policy OS 1.5)

Policy ED 8.4

Attract industry that complements and supports the local agricultural economy.

Objective ED 9

Create and encourage an economic climate to facilitate the redevelopment of existing commercial areas.

Policy ED 9.1

Provide for and encourage the maintenance and long term revitalization of existing commercial areas, such as Texas and North Texas Streets. Where appropriate, incentives shall be used to encourage and assist the private sector to maintain and revitalize these areas.

Program ED 9.1 A

Expand redevelopment district boundaries to include all properties adjacent to and fronting North Texas Street from Travis Boulevard to Air Base Parkway. (See Program UD 4.4 A)

Program ED 9.1 B

Extend the powers of eminent domain for all redevelopment areas, with appropriate restrictions, such as those prohibiting eminent domain on owner occupied residential units.

Policy ED 9.2

Leverage redevelopment funds and private funds by targeting federal, state, and local resources to the existing commercial areas.

Program ED 9.2 A

Evaluate the feasibility of creating enterprise zones, incubator projects, or other appropriate programs.

Supporting Text

Existing Conditions

Background

Fairfield is at the center of the fastest growing County in the San Francisco Bay Area, one of the strongest marketplaces in the nation. Fairfield also benefits from an excellent transportation network, availability of developable land, a diverse housing supply, a healthy business mix, and exceptional quality of life.

Throughout its early history, Fairfield's economy was primarily agricultural. Agriculture remains an important part of the City's economy and of its character. When Travis Air Force Base was established and later incorporated into the City, local employment concentrated at the Base. And while Travis remains the City's largest employer, economic development over the years has diversified the economic base and provided plentiful, stable and desirable employment opportunities.

Employment

Employment growth in Fairfield is strong and steady. Historically, Fairfield accounted for approximately one-third of Solano County's employment. Population growth in Fairfield is also strong, although its pace appears to be slowing and is exceeded by the pace of employment growth.

Commercial

Retail and office development generates jobs, offers convenience, and provides needed services to residents and local businesses. Commercial development also plays an important role in the City's financial ability to provide a high level of services to the community.

Retail

Fairfield is the retail leader of Solano County, generating approximately one-third of the County's total sales in the year 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, taxable retail sales increased 53 percent.

The City's retail sector is concentrated in four geographic areas: Solano Mall, Downtown Fairfield, North Texas Street and along Interstate 80.

Solano Mall exemplifies the strength of Fairfield's retail market. An enclosed regional shopping center of over one million square feet, its trade area embraces a population of over 250,000 and includes Vacaville, Vallejo, Suisun City, unincorporated Solano County, and much of Napa County.

The Gateway is an area of approximately fifty-six acres that wraps around the Mall to the north and west. The site includes a mixture of uses including office and retail.

The area is intended to serve as a focal point for commercial activity in the county. Located just north of the Mall, Gateway Plaza is the Gateway's primary retail development, a 196,000 square foot promotional retail center. In the year 2000, a new phase of development was completed in the Gateway, including a major national bookstore and other retail shops. In 2002, a new hotel with more than 150 rooms is planned to open.

Downtown Fairfield is a traditional city center. Retail development is concentrated on or near Texas Street. Within walking distance of the County's and the City's government offices, downtown businesses benefit from the proximity of a large pool of potential customers. Most downtown retailers are sole proprietors or partnerships, serving a largely local clientele. In 1989-90, The City's Redevelopment Agency sponsored a \$6 million improvement project that preserves the pedestrian scale and hometown feel of the downtown while adding color and vitality to the streets and sidewalks.

North Texas Street is a sparsely landscaped retail corridor featuring strip commercial development, gasoline stations, fast food restaurants, and neighborhood retail centers. The age of buildings ranges from the 1950's to the 1990's, with the majority of construction taking place in the 1950's and 1960's.

Retail development along the Interstate 80 corridor is primarily regional. Extending from the North Texas Street exit in the northeast part of the city to the Suisun Valley Road exit in Cordelia, existing development addresses freeway-related needs, such as fast food, lodging, and gasoline, as well as regional uses like automobile dealerships.

Office

Drawing regional and local tenants, Fairfield's office market experienced a dramatic transition in the late 1980's. The completion of a major quality office building in the center of the City, as well as the development of a number of quality office developments in the business parks, focused attention on the office market.

Downtown Fairfield offers more traditional office and office/retail options. City and County government offices create a spinoff demand for other professional offices.

Industrial Development

Fairfield's industrial sector is diverse and vigorous. Several manufacturing, light industry, back office, distribution, and research and development firms are located in Fairfield. Specific business and industrial parks were developed to meet the needs of particular businesses. Tolenas Industrial Park, a 300-acre park located along Air Base Parkway, is zoned for general manufacturing.

Solano Business Park and Busch Corporate Center are light industrial parks. Located along Highway 12, these parks contain light manufacturing facilities, professional offices, and distribution facilities. Other, smaller light industrial parks are located along Air Base Parkway (e.g., Travis Industrial Park) and in Cordelia (e.g., Fairfield-Cordelia Industrial Park). Located in Cordelia adjacent to Solano Community College, Fairfield Corporate Commons is planned for research and development and office uses. Its development currently is targeted toward office uses.

Future Conditions

Background

Under the policies contained in this element and other General Plan elements, Fairfield will continue to experience significant, yet controllable, levels of economic growth. As implemented, the plan policies will provide the City with the means to continue to diversify its economic base, while recognizing and protecting the important role of Travis Air Force Base.

Employment

Fairfield's one-third share of all Solano County jobs is expected to continue through 2020. Future job creation in the County is projected to come primarily from the retail, manufacturing, services, and construction sectors of the economy. In Fairfield, the relocation or expansion of small and medium-sized firms into the City accounts for a significant portion of job growth. At general plan buildout, Fairfield is projected to have approximately 77,000 jobs. Centers of employment are located in a number of locations through the city, and no one area is expected to receive a majority of new jobs.

Retail

Newer retail development along the I-80 corridor is expected to focus more on regional retail uses, and less on highway commercial uses, drawing customers from well beyond the City limits. Areas such as the 118 acre Regional Commerce Center at the junction of I-80 and I-680, and redevelopment of the County Hospital site at Texas Street and Beck Avenue are all examples of areas which will be developed on regional scale.

Neighborhood retail growth will be directed to designated neighborhood shopping center sites, located throughout the city in close proximity to surrounding residential areas.

Office

A limited amount of new office development will take place in the periphery of the Downtown. Successful leasing of completed buildings, along with affordable land prices and a low vacancy rate, will continue to contribute toward a significant demand in office projects. Office uses will continue to be developed at key intersections in the community. Furthermore, smaller office developments occupied by primarily service related businesses will develop in areas convenient to the neighborhoods.

The 157 acre Planned Employment Center, situated along the east side of Green Valley Road next to the Regional Commerce Center, will be developed for office and business-related uses in the coming years.

Approximately 70 acres of office uses are planned for the area surrounding the Fairfield-Vacaville Train Station, which will be constructed at the intersection of Peabody Road and the Union Pacific railroad tracks.

Industrial

With well over 10 million square feet of existing occupied industrial space and over 1,400 acres of vacant land planned for industrial and business development, Fairfield offers both short and long-term opportunities for quality business development.

With accessibility to Highway 12 and rail service, the Tolenas industrial park is ideal for additional heavy industrial users. There will continue to be demand for these industrial sites. However, large amounts of land currently designated for industrial uses in this area will make the supply of land exceed demand in the through the end of the decade.

Several hundred acres of vacant industrial acreage are located in the Solano Business Park, Busch Corporate Center, and Cordelia, providing ample available land for light industrial growth beyond the year 2000. These areas will continue to attract light industrial and back office uses and will see the greatest absorption over the next ten years.

At least 800 acres of unincorporated land east of Peabody Road is expected to be designated for development of an industrial park dedicated for research, development and high-technology businesses.